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Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 15084 230905Z
ACTION NODS-00

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FOR THE SECRETARY FROM HOLBROOKE

WHITE HOUSE FOR BRZEZINSKI

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, UNGA, MARR, SHUM, RP
SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE PROPOSAL THAT MRS. MARCOS MEET WITH PRESIDENT CARTER AT UNGA

1. AT BEGINNING OF SECOND DAY OF TALKS, MARCOS ASKED TO SEE ME ALONE. DURING ONE-HOUR CONVERSATION IN WHICH MANY OTHER THINGS WERE COVERED WHICH WILL BE REPORTED SEPTEL, MARCOS SAID THAT HE WAS SENDING HIS WIFE TO NEW YORK TO HEAD PHILIPPINE DELEGATION TO THE UNGA. ROMULO AND DEFENSE MINISTER ENRILE WILL ALSO ATTEND.

2. HE SAID THAT HIS EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD ALERTED HIM TO PRESIDENT'S INTENTION TO HAVE A LIMITED NUMBER OF BILATERAL MEETINGS IN NEW YORK. HE HAD CONSIDERED GOING TO NEW YORK HIMSELF IN ORDER TO MEET THE PRESIDENT, BUT HAD DECIDED IT WOULD BE BETTER TO SEND "THE FIRST LADY." HE THEN ASKED ME IF THE PRESIDENT COULD MEET WITH HER IN NEW YORK. HE DID NOT ASK FOR HER TO BE RECEIVED IN WASHINGTON.

3. I SAID THAT IT WAS QUITE LATE AND THAT THE
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PRESIDENT'S SCHEDULE MIGHT ALREADY BE FULL, BUT THAT I WOULD RELAY THE REQUEST TO WASHINGTON IMMEDIATELY. I ADDED THAT IN ANY CASE, AS HEAD OF DELEGATION, MRS. MARCOS WOULD HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO MEET THE PRESIDENT IN A LUNCHEON MEETING INCLUDING OTHER ASIAN LEADERS. THIS PLEASED MARCOS.

4. A PRESIDENTIAL MEETING WITH IMELDA (WITH ROMULO ALSO

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ATTENDING) HAS BOTH PLUSES AND MINUSES. HER POWER AND AUTHORITY ARE UNQUESTIONABLE AND MARCOS CLEARLY INDICATED THAT HE DOES NOT HAVE FULL CONFIDENCE IN ROMULO, WHOM HE REGARDS MORE AS AN ORNAMENT THAN A FUNCTIONING FOREIGN MINISTER. SUCH A MEETING WOULD PRESUMABLY FOCUS ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND ON A REAFFIRMATION OF THE AMERICAN COMMITMENT TO THE PHILIPPINES--THE LATTER MESSAGE WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE VALUE THROUGHOUT THE REGION AND ABENEFICIAL EFFECT ON THE CONTINUING DISCUSSIONS ON OUR BASES; THE FORMER SUBJECT, WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED, IS ONE WHERE THE PRESIDENT'S PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT MIGHT ALSO PROVE HELPFUL. (IN THIS REGARD, MARCOS ALSO SAID HE WAS PLANNING TO MOVE EARLY NEXT YEAR ON "NORMALIZATION"--I.E., ELECTIONS.) ON THE OTHER HAND, SUCH A MEETING MIGHT NOT BE REGARDED AS CARRYING THE PROPER SYMBOLIC QUALITIES DESIRED IN A PRESIDENTIAL BILATERAL IN NEW YORK, GIVEN IMELDA'S GENERAL IMAGE.

5. GIVEN THE LONG HISTORY OF US-PHILIPPINE RELATIONS, THE IMPORTANCE OF DEFINING A MORE STABLE BASIS FOR THE CONTINUED PRESENCE OF THE BASES, THE POTENTIAL VALUE OF A PERSONAL DISCUSSION OF THE IMPORTANCE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, AND THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF TURNING MARCOS DOWN, I WOULD RECOMMEND THAT A SHORT MEETING WITH MRS. MARCOS AND ROMULO BE SCHEDULED IF THERE IS TIME AVAILABLE.

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6. MARCOS ASKED IF IT WOULD BE POSSIBLE TO HAVE A REPLY BEFORE I LEAVE, AND SAID HE ATTACHES VERY HIGH IMPORTANCE TO THE REQUESTED MEETING. I SAID THAT I WOULD NOT GUARANTEE AN ANSWER BEFORE MY DEPARTURE (10 PM, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, EST), BUT THAT I WOULD RELAY HIS REQUEST IMMEDIATELY.
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